2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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the earth (*tɛŋɔnpiima*)'. As we have previously noted, any article or stray animal, the owner of which is unknown, is a *tɛŋɔnpiimɔr*. It must be handed to a tendaana. The rule applies to stray fowls, goats, sheep, and especially to objects of iron; and it is most scrupulously observed. A hoe or an axe, for instance, can safely be left lying about on a farm. Tallensi speak with awe of the sacrilege of appropriating a 'thing found on the Earth'. They say that swift retribution invariably overtakes a sinner, and they quote the example of those who occasionally break the taboo, by accident or purposely. It is particularly heinous to take anything found near an Earth shrine, where the mystical power of the Earth is directly localized. Even children are fearful of picking up bits of rubbish near *tɛŋgbana*. Breaches of Earth taboos serve, in the long run, to increase the respect in which they are held. The native is constantly reminded, by these taboos, that the useful, material earth is only the façade of the universal mystical Earth. They remind him that the security and satisfaction he derives from the utilization of the earth's resources are conditional upon his moral behaviour.

We have examined the relation of the concept of the Earth in its mystical aspect to the great public calamities that threaten the physical basis of the existence of the natives. But this concept has a positive side, too. When men do not offend it, the Earth permits crops to flourish, women to bear children, and men's enterprises to succeed. Locusts, Tallensi say, when they rationalize the powers they attribute to the Earth, come up out of the earth; tornadoes sweep across its surface; but, also, crops grow on the earth; homesteads stand on it; men walk on it; out of it they dig the roots they use to cure their illnesses and make magical defences for themselves; in it they bury their dead. All these services of the material earth have their reflex in the ritual values attached to the mystical Earth.

All Tallensi stand in awe of the Earth. We have learnt that they speak of it as 'a living thing', meaning by this that it intervenes mystically in human affairs in the same way as the ancestor spirits do. When they talk of the Earth they mention its remorseless punishment of sacrilege, and the things it prohibits, not its blessings. Yet it is the symbol to them of the forces that promote the common welfare of all mankind without discrimination. Thus a wandering stranger is a 'thing found on the earth'; but he is given to a chief and not to a tendaana. Chiefs are ritually qualified to sell a human being into slavery; a tendaana would commit a sacrilege against the Earth if he did so. As the priest of the Earth it is his duty to protect human beings, keep the peace among them, and be watchful against the dangers that threaten them. The dog lives in such close association with man that it has quasi-human qualities, and therefore stray dogs must also be surrendered to chiefs. And this holds for stray cattle, too, which are also closely identified with men owing to their great economic value and their special importance as sacrificial animals.

Everywhere, too, the Earth forbids the shedding of blood in strife, and, in the neighbourhood of important Earth shrines, the raising of the alarm signal (a long-drawn-out, high-pitched cry *yu-a-a-a-hi*) as a call to arms, and therefore to bloodshed. Men who transgress have to pay heavy